

XII.

CONCLUSION.

It may not be inappropriate at this time to embody in this book some facts concerning the development of the county in the last decade of the 19th century, which were momentous years for Pocahontas County.

In December, 1890, an epoch marking snow fell, making it the "winter of the deep snow." While it lay on the ground to the depth of three feet or more, Colonel John T. McGraw, of Grafton, made a visit to this county and purchased the farms known as Marlins Bottom for a town site. Five families lived on the land now occupied as the site of the town of Marlinton. The name of the postoffice had been changed a few years before from Marlin's Bottom to Marlinton. Mrs Janie B. Skyles, a Maryland lady, who was living here, being instrumental in effecting the change. It was bitterly opposed by some of the older citizens, who objected to the giving up of the descriptive and historic name of Marlin's Bottom.

The purchase of the town site by Colonel McGraw was the first intimation that county people had of proposed railway developments. The plan was that the

Camden System of railroads was to be extended up Williams River, across the divide at the head of Stony Creek, and to Marlinton. It was a part of the plan that the C. & O. R. R. would build an extension from the Hot Springs to Marlinton and connect with the Camden Road at that place.

The town of Marlinton was laid off in town lots in 1891, and widely advertised as a place where a town would be built. The building of the railroad was regarded as a certainty. The Pocahontas Development Company was chartered and took a deed for 640 acres on which the town was to be built. They put valuable improvements on it. An offer of \$5000 to be applied on a new court house was made, if the people of the county would change the county seat from Huntersville to Marlinton. The election held in the fall of 1891 gave the county seat to Marlinton. At this time Marlinton had a population of about one hundred people.

The railroad was not built at that time because of the money panic which came on the country at that time. Colonel McGraw, who had invested largely in lands elsewhere in the county, never ceased to try to interest capitalists in this county and develop it with a railroad. His attention being called to the natural route for a railroad up Greenbrier River, he had a survey made from Marlinton to Ronceverte, at a cost of \$10,000, and it was on this location that the railroad was afterwards built. The Greenbrier Railway was commenced in 1899 and finished in 1901. The Coal & Iron Railway is being built at the present time to connect with it at Durbin. In two years Pocahontas

County changed from being one of the few counties in the State without a railroad, to the county having the greatest railwap mileage of any county of the State.

Marlinton began to improve at once. It was incorporated at the April Term of the Circuit Court, 1900, and held its first election of officers May 5th, 1900.

The first newspaper to be published in this county was the Pocahontas Times, founded in 1882 at Huntersville, and moved to Marlinton in 1892. The Pocahontas Herald was published in 1894 at Huntersville, and later at Marlinton, and ceased to be published in 1896. The Marlinton Messenger was first published in 1900.

The first telephone to be built in the county was the Marlinton and Beverly telephone line finished to Marlinton in August, 1899. That same year telephone lines were built along all the principal roads of the county.

The first bank to go into business in the county was the Bank of Marlinton in 1899, and later in the same year the Pocahontas Bank was opened. For more than a year these banks carried in large sums of money by special messengers from the nearest express stations from 45 to 57 miles distant, over lonely roads.

Writing at the time of the railroad development just beginning, the natural resources of the county have not been touched. No attention has been paid to the vast areas of iron ore land in the east of the county, which will some day make this county famous as an iron field.

In the nineties it was discovered that Pocahontas

County had a vast supply of marble which was equal in value to any marble ever found in the United States. A company has been formed to develop this marble, and it will some day be ranked high among the marble deposits of the world.

The bulk of the timber is still standing, but an immense amount has been floated down the Greenbrier River, the St. Lawrence Boom & Manufacturing Company having removed in this manner a quarter of a billion feet of white pine. The walnut and cherry have been taken out in the last twenty-five years by rafting on the Greenbrier, which was once an important industry, rafting floods in the river being anxiously waited for. There were a number of skillful pilots who could thread their way with a raft of 50,000 feet of lumber between the rocks of this swift river.

We record these few facts in passing. It will require another book to do justice to the history of this county from the Civil War down, and there is much in that history that can better be reviewed by another generation.

The sketches which are embodied in this work have appeared in the Pocahontas Times, and have thus been scanned by the persons interested, and an opportunity afforded for correction that is invaluable, for history is nothing if not true. It has not been the work of a few months, but represents the work of ten years or more of preparation.

We wish to call attention to the fact that this book is a home product, written and printed in the county and published by reason of the hearty response of

many Pocahontas people who desired to have the annals of the county in an enduring form. The paper on which this book is printed is from wood grown on Cheat Mountain, in this county, and very kindly furnished at a nominal price by the West Virginia Pulp & Paper Company.

In compiling this book the writer and publishers have endeavored to make it an honest history of Pocahontas County, and they have in no instance given undue prominence to any name in it for a consideration, though opportunities have presented themselves which were tempting to the publishers, who are at heavy expense in publishing so large a book.

In submitting this book to the public, we are aware that there are imperfections and omissions that will be apparent to many readers. To such we would say that no book or writer can cover so great a subject, but that you will find in this work so much pertaining to the history of this county that it can well lay claim to its title.

THE END.